

# Documents on Diplomacy: Lessons

## Red-Flagged: Joseph McCarthy & Communism

- Standard: I. Culture  
II. Time, Continuity, and Change  
III. People, Places, and Environments  
IV. Individual Development and Identity  
V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions  
VI. Power, Authority, and Governance  
IX. Global Connections  
X. Civic Ideals
- Grade Level: 9–12
- Objectives: The student will:
- Analyze the charges by Joseph McCarthy through primary documents
  - Correlate world events with anti-communist actions in the United States
  - Imagine the impact of the Red Scare on the American public
- Time: 1 class period
- Materials: Documents: **1950** *Enemies from Within*  
**1950** *A Nest of Communists*
- Resources: *Timeline: The Early Cold War*
- Materials: Red Flags (Cards; see instructions below)  
Scissors
- Procedures:
- Pre-Activity*
1. Cut multiple sheets of red construction paper into playing card size, enough for each student to have about 25–30 red “flags.”
  2. Ask two or more students to prepare to deliver a speech a couple of days before *Activity 1* is scheduled for class. Provide copies of the document, *Enemies from Within*. The students should decide which sections of the speech each will read. They should plan to display excellent rhetorical skills.
- Lesson Day*
1. Have a stack of red “flags” on each student’s desk when they enter the room.

**2.** Ask students what the term, "red-flagged," means to them?

Possibilities:

- a.** A warning signal; a warning of danger or a signal to stop
- b.** Something that demands attention or provokes an irritated reaction.
- c.** A symbol of socialism, communism, or revolution
- d.** The solid red flag is displayed when conditions are too dangerous to continue the session in stock car racing. (There are other situations when red flags are used.)

**3.** Explain to students that they will use red cards to represent the act of red-flagging. The use of the cards actually will reflect almost all of the definitions.

**4.** Provide information about Joseph McCarthy and the "Red Scare." Use textbooks or short summaries from other sources.

**5.** Distribute copies of the documents, *Enemies from Within* and *A Nest of Communists*.

**6.** Explain to students that Joseph McCarthy, with his rhetoric and tactics, put the country into a red zone of anti-communist frenzy. They will hear the famous speech that he delivered in Wheeling, WV, February 9, 1950. Since there no recording of this speech exists, the class will present its own version of the speech.

**7.** Have the selected students come to the front of the room and prepare to speak.

**8.** The students serving as the audience will lend more objective ears to McCarthy's speech than individuals might have in the early 1950s. Being knowledgeable about the rhetorical act of repeating a key term or concept for emphasis and heightened interest, they will listen for all mentions of communism and the names of individuals associated with communism.

**9.** Each time students hear the word communism and the names of individuals associated with communism, they should hold up a red flag (card). As they hold up more than one flag, they should fan and hold the flags like one would do a deck of cards.

**10.** Have the selected students read the speech with vigor and enthusiasm.

**11.** When the speech is completed, have students compare the number of red flags they are holding. They literally have red-flagged the speech.

**12.** Discuss the feelings students had while listening to the speech. Did it come across as inflammatory? Did it create negative feelings about communism? Why would it have created much more reaction in the early 1950s than today? Which countries in the world were regarded as communist “enemies?” Ask students to describe the status/actions of China and the USSR at this time in history.

**13.** Refer students to the *Timeline: The Early Cold War*. Compile a list of events that fed communist fears in the United States

14. Apply the intensity of the speech to how people would have reacted to the foreign policy efforts of the Truman administration. Distribute copies of the document, *A Nest of Communists*, McCarthy’s telegram to President Truman. Discuss the impact that such accusations must have had on the Department of State while it was developing and conducting foreign policy. ■